

MASSACHUSETTS.

MEMORIAL

OF

MERCHANTS OF BOSTON.

JANUARY 21, 1833.

Read, and referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

*To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:*

Your memorialists, merchants of Boston, respectfully represent, that the heavy duty which has been levied upon hemp has operated as a great impediment to our navigation; and that, though it is proposed to reduce the present duty to thirty dollars per ton subsequently to March 1834, the burden which would remain would still be unnecessarily heavy.

Your memorialists ask your attention to this subject with the more confidence from the fact that, in the report of the Committee on Manufactures during the last session, it was stated that "it has been amply ascertained that this article, as imported from abroad, does in no wise enter into competition with that raised in our own country." Besides, the charges on the importation of hemp are at least 25 per cent., so that even if domestic hemp needed protection, it would find sufficient in the heavy expenses of importation.

That the heavy duty has materially affected the consumption, may be inferred from the fact that, previous to its increase, the importation of hemp, for five years preceding 1825, averaged more than 5,000 tons per annum; whilst, during the past three years, per official returns to September 30, 1831, it has averaged less than 3,000 tons per annum.

Nor is the place of the hemp formerly imported supplied by that of domestic growth. *Cordage* is now imported in place of the hemp, which formerly gave employment to our ships and manufacturers, or our vessels are driven to procure their supplies in foreign ports, and this heavy burden is imposed on our ship owners and manufacturers without any advantage to any other class. On a vessel of 400 tons, this tax now amounts to more than six hundred dollars on her first equipment, besides an annual tax of a very considerable amount for wear and tear.

In connexion with this, we would respectfully invite your attention to the recent unparalleled increase of the entry of foreign tonnage into our ports

compared with the trifling increase in the entry of American tonnage. From official documents it appears, that, during the past seven years, the entry of foreign tonnage has increased from 92,927 tons, to 281,948 tons, being more than 200 per cent.; whilst, during the same period, the entry of American tonnage increased less than 9 per cent. It will be observed, that we speak of the annual entry of vessels into our ports, and are not, therefore, liable to the mistakes which have occurred respecting the existing amount of American tonnage.

If in the economy and skill with which they are navigated, American vessels are equal to those of other nations, such an overwhelming disparity between the increase of the entry of foreign shipping and our own, in our own ports, can arise only from the injurious operation of our own laws.

Among the most injurious, is a tax on hemp. The English Government has lately reduced the duty to the nominal duty of one penny per hundred weight, and English ship owners, our most active competitors, have made a public acknowledgment of the relief thus granted to them.

By our wise and liberal policy, the vessels of every nation which will reciprocate with us, are admitted into our ports on terms of perfect equality with our own. We but ask to be relieved from shackles, when brought to contend with unshackled competitors.

Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully request your attention to the expediency of an entire repeal of the duty on hemp, or, at least, to its reduction to a much lower rate than has been proposed.

T. H. PERKINS.

BRYANT, STURGES & CO.

WM. LAWRENCE.

JOHN DORR.

GILES LODGE.

MOSES WHEELER.

NATH. GODDARD.

THOS. B. WALES & CO.

HENRY LEE.

DANIEL P. PARKER.

E. HATHAWAY & CO.

WILLIAM GODDARD.

BENJ. RICH & SON.

A. W. THAXTER, JR.

W. J. LORING.